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UNCLAS VILNIUS 000560

SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO EUR/NB AND EUR/RPM
NSC FOR DAMON WILSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA'S ESDP CONTRIBUTION NO THREAT TO NATO
COMMITMENTS

1. GOL Defense Minister Gediminas Kirkilas and representatives of Germany, Latvia, Poland, and Slovakia on May 23 signed a declaration in Brussels to create a joint battle group to serve in the EU Rapid Reaction Force. Kirkilas announced that the joint force will assume its first rotation in 2010. This commitment will bring to 13 the number of battle groups participating in European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Gediminas Varvuolis, head of the MFA's NATO Division, confirmed that this contribution to ESDP will not hinder or reduce Lithuania's participation in the NATO Reaction Force (NRF). Varvuolis said that the GOL strongly supports the NATO position that nations not allocate the same assets to ESDP and the NRF at the same time.

2. Comment: Lithuania firmly considers NATO the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security and has no intention of robbing from NATO to pay ESDP. While the GOL recognizes it needs to be active in the emerging European security identity, we do not anticipate that its participation will lead to a reduced commitment to NATO, in general, or the NRF, in particular.
Mull